

-- This application is a 35 U.S.C. §371 filing of International Patent Application No.

PCT/FR00/00573, filed March 8, 2000. This application claims priority benefit of French Patent Application No. 99/03027, filed March 9, 1999. --

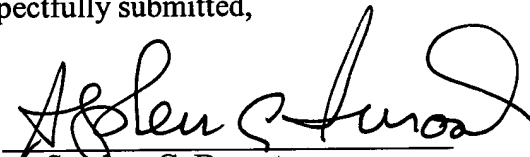
Applicants make this Preliminary Amendment prior to examination and without prejudice or disclaimer of any excluded subject matter, and expressly reserve the right to pursue such subject matter in this application or in one or more continuing applications.

If a telephone call would further prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (415) 268-7000. In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Assistant Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 514842000100. However, the Assistant Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

Dated: September 7, 2001

Respectfully submitted,

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